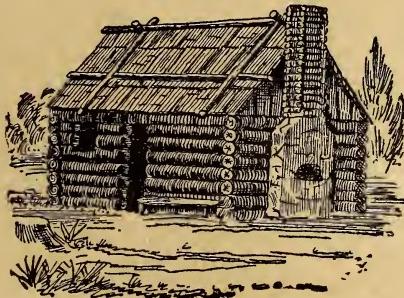


YEAR BOOK OF THE
OLD SETTLERS' ASSOCIATION



JOHNSON COUNTY, IOWA

1924 - 1925

OFFICERS OF JOHNSON COUNTY OLD
SETTLERS' ASSOCIATION

1924-1925

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PREFATORY NOTE

For a number of years the editor of the Old Settlers' Annual has gathered together the necessary materials and superintended its publication. He has continued to do this work because no other person, after most earnest solicitations, has consented to take the job. The booklet has been prepared and distributed at each annual gathering of the Old Settlers' Association, and, while in no sense an important publication, we feel that it would be missed and that its discontinuance would be regretable.

The principal purpose of the Old Settlers' Annual has been to feature and keep alive in the minds and memories of old settlers, and residents of the county generally as well, the important incidents of the settlement and early history of Johnson County. The trials and hardships, the ideals and modes of living and the sacrifices and labors of the original settlers of the county should not be forgotten. The incidents of early historical interest should not become a blank in the public mind. The location of the territorial capitol, the place of meeting of the Constitutional Convention which framed the present constitution of the State, and the first house inhabited by the white man should be to the people of the county what Lexington and Concord, Bunker Hill and Mount Vernon are to the people of the nation.

For the publication of this year, aside from an interesting article kindly contributed by Hon. John Springer, the editor has selected from the historical publications concerning county history, various anecdotes and descriptions of early incidents in the settlement of the county. While unimportant in themselves, they are authentic because related by writers who had knowledge of the facts at first hand.

They are published, as before stated, in order to revive in the memories of the few remaining pioneers, as well as to form a picture for the present generation, some of the real conditions of pioneer life.

It is hard to realize what a long list of comforts and conveniences are enjoyed today, of which the early settler was deprived. Picture to yourself the actual conditions surrounding the pioneer home and think what such a situation would mean to you.

The busy housewife of today wishes to order her supplies. She goes to the telephone and, if she fails to get central instantly, jingles the telephone receiver in her impatience and in a moment orders her supplies and they are delivered at her door within a few hours. Visualize, if you please, in contrast, the pioneer securing his supplies. He is seen walking a score of miles over byways and trails and carrying his provisions home on his back. As an illustration, in 1837, Mr. Henry Felkner was engaged in building a sawmill on Rapid Creek about three miles northeast of Iowa City. His supplies being exhausted, he walked eight miles to the home of the nearest acquaintance, borrowed a horse and rode to Bloomington, forty miles distant, and procured his supplies. Returning to the home of his friend, he walked eight miles carrying seventy pounds of provisions. This differs somewhat from a telephone order for groceries!

The person of today who rides luxuriously in his limousine over paved roads should picture the winding trails through wood and bog over which the early settler urged his oxen.

Those who enjoy the radiance of the electric light should remember the pine torch and the tallow dip.

Johnson County is unusually rich in early historical materials. It was one of the earliest developed counties in the State. Here were held the conventions and legislative assemblies that molded the destiny of the Territory and State. No county is richer in early historical events of major importance. As citizens of the county let us do our duty toward preserving and keeping accurate the records of these events.

REMINISCENCES

By JOHN SPRINGER

SOME reminiscences have been asked from me. The succeeding paragraphs do not answer that definition. Notes and incidents coming within one's horizon are not to be picked up nor set down in a few days. What I have here presented is to be taken only as a bit of index, the substance of which each may fill out.

My recollection of early life in Iowa City and the country about—especially on the eastern border of town—is not as clear as I might wish, only a few things standing out conspicuously. I have been told that the first night of the family in the city was one of some discomfort. The last stage of our journey was from Pana, Illinois, where we stayed over the week end, because at that time not a great many trains ran on Sunday. It was at some early morning hour on June first, 1857, when we were landed at the Trusdell House on South Clinton Street, yet standing with little outward change to mark the sixty-eight years. Here we were accommodated, as also other late comers, with beds on the floor. The next day lodging and board were secured at the American House, on Jefferson Street, about the present location of the State University Law Building. This house was managed by a Mr. Smith who was distinctly differentiated from other Smiths by the title "American House Smith." He bulked quite largely in city property transfers before the war. His son Julius married Miss Calista Sanders, sister of Euclid Sanders.

Living at an Iowa City hotel in 1857 was quite too expensive for my parents, and a small piece of land was purchased on the east side of the city; indeed it is now the

eastern boundary of East Iowa City and a little house built thereon. The retaining its possession was one of the common "tragedies of the poor." After a few months of fancied security it became necessary to sacrifice all the comforts and many of the necessities of living in order to secure an undisputed title to the home. During an entire year the pork and bacon, chickens and eggs, wheat and flour, and the stock of hand tools made by my father had to be sold to raise money—indeed anything that would fetch money was thrown into the pot of sacrifice to save the property.

Our place was on the Upper Muscatine Road, but the school house—Oak Grove—was on the Workman Road half a mile north. That winter corn was almost worthless; between home and the school house a field of perhaps ten acres was left unhusked. This patch very soon became the resort of prairie chickens and rabbits which found covert in the surrounding hazel clumps. Some dealers in the city set about in the field many "tilt traps," constructed from lath and so baited that when a bird alighted it was slid down into the trap. But the city market was flooded with game and prairie chickens were unsalable, and so the city people abandoned birds and traps. With other little boys I carried home these trapped birds, or so many as were needed, the remainder being liberated. Thus when not yet nine years old I became the "provider" of the family. When gorged to saturation with the dry and lean prairie chicken, there was a "change off" to quail and rabbit (caught in figure four traps), also valueless in the market. In the fall and succeeding spring there were duck and goose. A deer was killed in the woods but most of this was sold, and I think some raccoon meat was turned into money. A few stray mink fell into the purse by way of fur. That fall, winter, and spring gave to me, as I presume it did to

other like circumstanced four or five families, a distaste for game which I have not outgrown.

The summer school vacation was long, and at one time there being no work for me at home, I "hired out" to a Mr. Farmer (I heard afterward he was an Englishman who had quit the Mormons here), living on the "Captain Irish Farm," some four miles from Iowa City on the Upper Muscatine Road. As it was too far for me to go home at night, I slept in the barn on the hay with the hired man. My stint was to "drop corn." The old crude hand planter was just coming in, but the price put it out of the reach of the average western farmer. This farm was just across the road from that now owned by Mr. Lord, and it seemed to me as though all the blackbirds of Iowa made the two farms their headquarters. Every tree, bush, even patches of dead tall grass bore nests with those curious mottled eggs.

Here I received the first real money that I had ever earned by my own labor, and it set for me a proud mark when I laid down my earnings on the table at home. For there in the little pile of silver was a gold piece of five dollars, the first I had ever seen, and I was indeed reassured when after sundry balancings and weighing from hand to hand it was pronounced good!

It was on the "Captain Irish Farm" that I had my first sight of Gilbert, Thomas, and John Irish. They were building fence and in those days a "fence" that was "built" usually meant post and board. (Stake and rider fence was "laid up.") This required digging post holes and setting posts about eight feet apart, and nailing on sixteen foot boards; I think four boards made a fence, unless it was intended to be hog tight, then five were used. Ordinarily the lumber was pine, rough in lack of finish. Occasionally farmers would have their own ash, elm, sycamore (water

birch) or cottonwood trees cut into fencing lumber, and it was a triumph of engineering skill to so fasten the two latter to the posts that in drying they would stay on the proper side and not warp to the extraction of the nails. Oak was seldom used for boards but almost invariably for posts. Perhaps there is not a half mile of post and board fence left in this county.

The most remarkable agricultural experiment of early days in which I assisted in a small way was that undertaken by Mr. George Shockey, who rented three or four acres of land adjoining my home and planted it to castor beans. As a garden plant the castor bean is one thing; three acres of it on new rich prairie is quite another. How those plants did grow! Stalk and leaf quite overshadowed the pods. When the time came for harvest a staging of new pine lumber, about forty feet square, was built in the meadow, its sides only about two feet high. The pods were thrown on this to ripen and open. They did not open as reasonable bean pods should, but popped, and the returns from that crop scattered over a discouragingly wide expanse of tall grass meadow. It was suggested to cut the grass and gather out the beans, but it was not done, and the crop was largely a loss. Under the sheltering of grass a good many beans survived the winter, and for several years straggling plants grew as a testimonial to the failure to make castor beans a paying crop in Iowa.

I have mentioned the Oak Grove school. Aside from its scholastic work it was notable for spelling schools, lyceums, debates—in the latter of which the parents and elder youths participated, and there has come down through the ages an unverified tale of how one farmer came out at the close of an argument with the loss of the tails of his new corduroy coat which were in the hands of his opponent's wife, who

came to the aid of her husband when the verbal contest had suddenly taken on a militant phase.

The middle reach of Ralston Creek ran between the Upper Muscatine and the Workman Roads, and as the crossing for school attendance was trespass permitted by sufferance, there were no bridges; a private road carried over a wide but shallow place might be waded even at high water; but at flood time the south side youngsters pleaded the creek could not be waded. On one occasion, when the creek bed was dusty, an unfortunate truant gave as excuse—probably scared into it, that “the creek was too high to wade.” Corporal punishment was illustrated in those days and the teacher was at pains to secure to the culprit a “whalin’” on both sides of the creek. Near the eastern line of the city, at “The Quarry” in “Clark’s Grove” (now Woodlawn), Ralston Creek expanded into what was known locally among the smaller boys as the “swimmin’ hole,” and it didn’t get the name from James Whitcomb Riley. Here town and country boys, in the one universal uniform, fraternized and fought without interruption save as comrades cheered and encouraged.

Near the Oak Grove school house flourished for some years “Westphal’s Garden.” This was a source of concern to many good people. It was a vegetable garden, had perhaps the only greenhouse in the county, and a dancing platform in a beautiful grove of oaks. On holidays and sometimes on Sundays sports and games—from sack races to climbing a pole, maybe it was greased as some said—and at times a “cag” of something, with a brass band from the city gave an air of joy and a tinge of pink to the surrounding atmosphere. As I recall country people were rather shy in their patronage. There was another and more flourishing “Garden” on the Rochester Road near the Gower home. This was annexed to Ruppert’s brewery.

There was a big dancing platform and a cave in which beer was aged and stored. The Sunday games and dances were even more conspicuous than Westphal's, and the latter suffered in comparison. I have a remembrance of a corn husking at which in spite of the large attendance the crop was too big to be got out of the way as had been anticipated, and it was discovered that the stock of "commissary," only it wasn't called by that name, was running short. No man could be spared to go the mile or more to town, and I couldn't be trusted with a team, so was sent on foot with a gallon jug and a sealed note to a grocery man. The grocery man said "no" and said it good and hard when I opened my mouth. The jug filled he handed it to me with a stick of striped candy and pointed to the door. This transaction no doubt was criminal in view of the then law. I returned to the "husking" and was received with more earnest acclaim than I remember to have since met.

In those days everybody burned wood. It is not likely that a dozen coal stoves could have been located in the county. The railway locomotives were wood burning, and huge piles of sawed fuel lined the south side of the track where the stock yards are now located. It was no unusual thing to see fifty wagon loads of wood around the park, and fuel was a certain money bringer in the market. Some years later it was said the office of wood measurer was the best paying position in the gift of the City Council. Importing a custom from Europe many people, especially women, might be seen on the roads leading from the northeastern part of the city to the timber bringing in on their backs great loads of "fagots," brush from dead trees or from clearings on which it had been piled up for burning.

My remembrance is fairly distinct as to the first harvesting machine I saw in the field. It was on the "Cohick Place," later owned by Webb Smith. The machine was an

immense construction, the driver perched high alongside the reel. The frame was of wood and the whole thing when in operation probably weighed two tons. There was a man to "rake off" and throw out sheaves to the following binders. This was set to work in a field of heavy oats in view of a crowd of surrounding farmers, many of whom may have been prospective purchasers. The ground was soft and the huge machine sunk down so deeply that four nor six horses could drag it around. It is my thought that the machine was not new, and that probably lack of skilled direction had much to do with its failure. Anyway it stood for years in the barnyard, enshrouded in kindly weeds, the frame work slowly rotting down.

There were few people in the county in 1870 who did not know, or know of, Dr. Jesse Bowen; and his name even yet lingers in local history as the friend and associate of John Brown—Brown of Osawatamie. In the early sixties I only knew him by sight, though my parents lived for two years on his Scott Township farm. He was a leader in politics while his daughters—there were no sons—held high place in social affairs. One was the wife of Abel Beach, whose poems (some of them published by the Old Settlers' Association) remain as yet unknown to fame; another daughter married D. F. Wells, one of the first professors in the State University and prominent in State educational history; Jessie was the wife of Capt. J. W. Sterling, and is yet lovingly remembered for her devoted charitable work in the Methodist Episcopal Church of the city—a tender memorial to her only child, an accomplished girl who early was called to a crown of life. I do not recall that the Doctor was a model farmer, though he was a large land owner. He had a line of hard maple trees at the lane leading from the road to the home; of much less general benefit and beauty was the row of cottonwoods on each side of the road and not

long since cut away. His orchard was among the show places of early horticulture, including many varieties, principally apples, some now perhaps unusual. I think I remember Maiden Blush, Bellflower, Rambo, Russet, Willow Twig, Jeniton, and Sheepnose. I have in mind that he gave some attention to well meant attempts to domesticate or improve the wild crab apple and the wild plum.

About all we have done with the wild fruit of Iowa is summed up in its destruction. Crab apples, wild plums, black and red haws, cherries, are now almost unknown. A pair of wild plum trees failing to supply a crop for a couple years, my father, taking expert advice, bored an inch augur hole through the trunks. I do not recall the following crop but the trees did not long survive—due it was said to his failure to insert the proper kind of a plug in the hole. I do not know the origin of this bit of superstition.

Wild flowers have followed the fruits. Several varieties of lady slippers and not a few lovely ferns are almost extinct. Three kinds of noble lilies, that often were spared when they grew in patches so rankly that they spoiled the hay, are now bought at high prices from dealers to ornament gardens. Dr. Macbride said to me not long ago that the railroad right-of-way promised to be the last refuge of native flora, and here the practice of early cutting and burning is destroying the plants.

But I owe a grateful remembrance to Dr. Bowen. His orchard was a favorite feeding ground of gophers, and among the repressive measures I was subsidized by a bounty per "skelp." Perhaps Mr. Beach, whose bookstore was the place of payment, doubted whether all the scalps were of bona-fide trespassers. In one of his visits to the farm the Doctor asked if I went outside the orchard to catch victims.

My efforts made little impression and the adoption of chemical suffocation was tried with better results.

Roads through all the years have been a subject of reproach in Iowa; and at this very time there is an abundance of laws and measures for "Good Roads," with no very general improvement. Owners of machines using internal combustion engines frequently and feelingly objurgate the farmer because he declines to tax himself some twenty thousand dollars per mile to build good roads across Iowa. Just in front of my early home was perhaps the worst piece of road between Davenport and Des Moines, a most terrible hundred yards or so. It was not a distinct water course, only a swale or "draw." There was no going around it—like Bunyan's Slough of Despond there it was, and in foul weather the terror of the road and the neighborhood. Very early I learned to recognize all the varieties and tones and shades of profanity, easily acquired by attending upon the efforts of "movers" doubling ox teams to make the pass without unloading. My father was road supervisor and perhaps was elected to that position that he might bear the burden of bad road at his own door. I have a notion that for years most of the road work and tax were directed at this place, for it was regularly "fixed" every year. The owner of the "Little Grove" at the top of the hill east had four or five acres of land grubbed free to feed the morass with brush and saplings, while the hill was cut down to construct a causeway.

It was during one of my father's terms as road supervisor that the "Workman" or Fairall road was opened through eastward, that is officially opened, for there had long been a desultory track. I am hazy as to details, for it was so like some of the *New York Mercury* and *Ledger* stories that perhaps I have them mixed, and liking the flavor of romance, I have not consulted dusty records. But

there is in mind gatherings of men and horses in front of the stately Fairall home, fences put up and fences torn down, deputy sheriffs, constables, lawyers, "sick 'em" and "wipe 'em up," "cross my dead body," "last ditch," and such hints of lurid tragedy. Somehow or other one side won out and the road went through. I think it was a reflection of this incident that at the next election my father sought a "vindication" of his official conduct. The road district was a part of Iowa City township, and had a voting population of perhaps twenty; I have reason to now believe that something like two hundred votes were cast for road supervisor in the district, but sure I am that our family went down in defeat, though my father consoled himself in holding that if the election had been fair, he would have won over the "other fellow" by at least twenty-five.

Nor was Iowa City much better served in roads than the country. Iowa Avenue was its main artery of access on the east, College Street being passable only when Ralston Creek was droughty. Three bridges obstructed the Avenue —one over Ralston, one in the block east of Dr. Houser's residence; and a third near the Unitarian Church. When Dubuque Street was paved an original "corduroy" road was discovered about eight feet down. The brick house north of Maruth's clothing store was originally of three stories. On College Street there was a bridge in front of the newspaper office, and it wasn't a low bridge either. The location of the People's Grocery was occupied by a three story brick hotel, and much interest was taken in the procedure when an outside engineering firm lifted the old structure straight up a full story to bring it to a new street level. Ralston Creek had excavated away a good part of the east side of Gilbert Street at College; from Washington Street to the Rock Island track the creek has been picked up and moved a block east. More than once teams were

"mired down" on Dubuque Street between Washington and College. It was not until the seventies that the "cow-path" was constructed to the Rock Island depot—then on Johnson Street.

In those days when it was dry and every store and shop had a wooden awning, dust was a nuisance to be reckoned with; when it rained the streets were shallow creeks, and partly drying stagnant pools remained, sometimes for weeks. Such conditions favored the swine and goose industry. A considerable section of the city retained until recently the name of "Goosetown," but it would not be easy to define its exact boundaries. Later the pig and the goose at times were annoying and there was an ordinance, often amended, prohibiting the running at large of pig and goose, and providing penalties, the impounding and sale of offending animals. Such "laws" were not popular and enforcement was spasmodic. Clinton Street just north of College was bad in bad weather; in front of what is now Woolworth's was a depression, referred to as *The mudhole*, and when the official in charge allowed his official activity to slacken the geese "below the hill" came up town on foray. On the west side of the street were some of the fine shops of the town, among them a drug store. It was a custom for the proprietors in balmy spring to scrub say twice a week in the early morning. The clerk had just finished this duty and dropped in to a neighbor for a chat. A wagon at good speed came down street and rushed the mudhole. The geese struck west for home, and the open door of this store attracted them across the narrow walk and through the store they started. "Look out, Sam!" someone yelled and Sam looked in, but too late! Jumping behind the counter he executed a flank movement and turned about the column. But geese are perverse creatures, and upon their exit he sadly contemplated the last condi-

tion of the floor and agreed that it was worse than the first, and that customers would not be desirable for several hours.

The topography of Iowa City has much changed since the publication of an edition of Chambers's Encyclopaedia, in which it was said that the city was built upon three terraces—the first comprising the steamboat landing, lumber yards, warehouses, and the public promenade; the second public buildings, manufactories, and shops; and third, residences and parks. No one perhaps imagined in 1858 that the south side of Iowa Avenue east of Ralston Creek would ever be graded down or built up, or that East Washington Street would be "unkinked" to admit a wagon track. Years and years later the City Council gave Mr. Patterson in a "swap" ten or twenty feet of South Dodge Street north of Washington on the theory that it was a clear case of "no thoroughfare" and impassable except to cats. Now the street is paved and drivers take it both ways "on high."

All the histories of Johnson County and of Iowa City have stories about the early days of "Steamboating on the Iowa." I can not tell much about it, though my uncle, William Reninger, with Colonel Harvey Graham and Henry Sporleder, builded the good ship Iowa City (in the ship yard at the north end of Capitol Street—the city probably donating the use of the street) whereof William Reninger was master, Harvey Graham engineer, and Henry Sporleder clerk. These people, as near as I can remember, had no boys to balance their girls, and I permitted it to be known that I did not ask any one to insure me the position of cabin boy on the vessel. I had read Ned Buntline, and for months my expectations were high, and I fancied all the other boys of Iowa City envied me. My mother and uncle did not share my anticipations and the steamer sailed without me. When the boat went down for the last time in a Mississippi gale at New Boston it was probably a matter of

relief to the builders who had in large part ceased to be owners.

The tornado of May, 1859, made a strong impression upon me, though only nine years old. It was visible in the west as a black cloud low on the horizon, the long elephant trunk, even blacker than the cloud above, swaying in the wind. When it crossed the Iowa River its color instantly changed to white, and at a distance of about a mile it seemed to be twenty feet or so in diameter, going east at frightful speed accompanied by a dreadful roaring. Only for a few moments did we see this when a torrent of rain shut off the view. The second or third day after the storm a party of boys went to the Jesse Berry farm perhaps three miles from our home. Mr. Berry's house was destroyed and he killed. The floor was in place on the foundation, but not even a board was left of the structure. The path of the storm was so clearly cut that it seemed as though it might have been measured to an inch. I brought back a wagon spoke broken square off at hub and felloe, which was afterward used on the school playground as a ball bat. When a ball was struck "just right" the spoke would "shiver" in the striker's hand with a tingling sensation hardly to be forgotten in years.

It was a long abiding tradition that Mr. Berry's "hired man" was caught up by the tornado between the house and barn, carried through the air, nearly a mile, and dropped to the earth practically uninjured. He was said to have declared with some volubility that he was going "back east" and that he "wasn't staying in a country where people were carried to heaven in a chariot of wind." And when later a report trickled westward that he had been killed in a railroad accident, more than a few of those familiar with the circumstances looked upon his reported death as a "judgment."

My recollections of war times are many and varied, but they are largely published matters, upon which much has been written by those better qualified. I have a hazy notion that the eighteen year old son of a near neighbor joined the camp of Company B, First Iowa, at the old fair ground, and repenting of his action refused to take the oath of enlistment, and in consequence was "drummed out of camp" with all the attendant ignominy. When Camp Pope was established my home was within less than a mile across country, and as a convalescing officer was at the house for some time, my facilities for getting inside the lines were fairly good. But being only eleven years old my enlistment was not encouraged, and I had no chance to fill a large place in military history, and an uncle who was a Captain was at pains to see that I did not run away or do any outrageously foolish thing. However I did contract a skin affection for which sulphur is the outstanding cure, and I got lots of it. Then I was indiscreet enough to get measles and donate it to my sisters; on recovery I found that the attitude of guards was wholly changed, and my military career was ended.

President Lincoln was assassinated on Friday night. Rumors and many stories came in by the Davenport and Muscatine papers of Saturday morning, but his death was not known. I was in town on Saturday and caught some of the intense feeling and longing for news. There would be no train and no papers until Monday, and the nearest telegraph office was at Muscatine. James Lee and George Fink whose stores were the "news depots" started for Muscatine on Saturday afternoon in a light open buggy. Both were light weights, Mr. Fink weighing only about a hundred pounds. His mare was an animal locally noted for speed and endurance and both were needed for that sixty mile run. Sunday before noon they returned, and I think I remember

them going by my home, the black bordered flags on the dashboard telling more plainly than words the sorrowful tidings of the death of Abraham Lincoln.

Maybe it was in 1868 that one Jones, a plasterer, caught the Thespian contagion, organized a "troupe" and essayed to prove that he and his company were real actors. The financial resources of the "producers" were as limited as Jones's, and it seemed his genius would perish for lack of promotion. Neither Mr. Brainerd nor Mr. Irish, who owned the papers and printing offices, would risk more than a couple dollars in publicity, while the rent of Metropolitan Hall and the securing stage properties put a mortgage upon the prospective receipts. Several persons took upon themselves to help out Jones, one being Fred Theobald, the back end of whose shoe shop became the location for activities of an unusual kind. Here the helpers met and concocted extravagant handmade posters, such as never before had any theatre displayed. The *Press* furnished the paper and from J. K. Corlett's carriage shop came the colored paints made to do duty as inks, and not always with success. (Jones had advertised two nights—the first night play being "Dick Turpin.") The audience filled the hall; there was only one woman in front of the footlights and she left early. There was no second night, Mr. Hutchinson refusing the use of the hall.) The artist for the pictures and lettering was Charles D. Weldon, a young man, hardly twenty-one, proprietor of the "City Hat Store" on Washington Street, where Bremer's now stands. His store and stock passed out in one of the numerous "conflagrations" of frame shacks that made merchandising somewhat of a gamble in Iowa City. He gave up trade and returned east, resumed his art studies, later attaining considerable reputation as an artist and illustrator. It is in mind that he was one of the trio, headed by Lafcadio Hearn, who voyaged to

Japan and described Japan and Japanese life for *Harpers' Magazine*—Mr. Weldon making the drawings from which the magazine illustrations were engraved, Hearn being the author of the papers. Copies of the *State Press* in the Historical Society Library show how Mr. Weldon made his art taste “useful” by engraving his advertisements on boxwood.

In January, 1867, when sixteen years old, I embarked on real life in the *State Press* office as a “printer’s devil,” a term almost forgotten. I speedily mastered the outstanding fundamentals of the art, including the use of tobacco both as a ruminant and an exhilarant. While Mr. Irish’s life, especially as a young man in Iowa City, was an “open book,” I think he had very few intimates—I do not now recall one. An old friend who knew him much better than I and over a longer period, was called on to write a sketch of his life, but after some study gave it up. He had two remarkable and unusual “gifts”—his splendid ability as a public speaker and his direct and incisive manner of writing. I heard him speak many times and the instance that lingers as the most brilliant and effective was a political address at Isaac Beem’s place in Tiffin one evening in October. It was the recounting of an incident of the war, the night before the battle of Cedar Creek, in Virginia, in which the Twenty-second Iowa infantry was so honorably engaged, dwelling on the march of a detachment of cavalry being brought into position to support the men on the following day. It deeply impressed me, and while I have lost most of the thought and all the language, I yet hold the faint echo in mind as marking one of the few pieces of real eloquence I have heard.

Mr. Irish was a man of power and of strong personal influence—one who never forgot a friend and was as ready to forgive an injury done him. I bring back a single inci-

dent, all the parties to which have passed out of life. On the occasion of one of his visits to the east a long telegram came to me to be handed to Mr. Irish or forwarded to him, his address being then unknown to the sender. It was a most pitiful personal appeal that he would use his influence to retain the writer (a one time leading republican politician and a millionaire in business) in a petty little government position in the forestry department of the Pacific coast. I think more than a quarter of a century had passed since they had met, yet Mr. Irish promptly recognized and supported his claim and with success.

Probably all his old acquaintances will recall that Mr. Irish did not wear a necktie, and it was said that his refusal to adjust himself to prevailing fashion made him ineligible to a diplomatic appointment. If so he was gainer, for his position as Naval Officer of San Francisco was more satisfactory and lucrative than the ordinary diplomatic post. In his youth he was fairly proficient as a reader and talker of French, self-taught I believe with his brother Thomas. Later in life he made some progress in Spanish. Admitted to the bar I believe he never practiced law in Iowa, but he was engaged in some important cases in California, one being international.

He was I think the owner of the first telephone line in Iowa City, though maybe it was not then called telephone. It was a wire stretched from the *Press* office to his home on the corner of Market and Johnson Streets, as nearly as possible in a direct line. There was no electrical connection, the line being worked by "percussion," the impact of the voice upon a diaphragm of thin metal in a tube. It worked well for a few hours or days, while the wire remained taut, but as it gradually lengthened under the strain the talking quality was lost, and it was only a few weeks until he finally gave it up.

In every way and on every side he was opposed to the "Interference Theory of Government." His last public appearance in Iowa City was as a speaker in opposition to the woman suffrage proposition. The addresses he made at several points in the State were strong factors in its defeat. In his later years Mr. Irish engaged in constructive agriculture. He joined with others in the reclamation of a large area of salt marsh on San Francisco Bay near Berkeley. A dike was built, the water pumped out, the growth of rank vegetation fostered, clay hauled in until many acres of fine farming land had been brought under cultivation and it had been demonstrated that in California the centuries old project of building land from the sea could be as successfully carried on as in Holland.

SOME "FIRSTS" IN JOHNSON COUNTY HISTORY (By the Editor)

It is always interesting to old settlers, and those interested in the early history of Johnson County, Iowa, to ascertain the first things that happened in the various activities of the early settlement of Johnson County. We are setting forth in this article some facts gleaned from the history of Johnson County concerning some of the first things done in its making.

One of the first white men who ever came into Johnson County, for the purpose of engaging in business, was John Gilbert, who came as an agent for the American Fur Company.

The first trading house of this Company, and the first ever established in Johnson County, consisted of a stockade enclosure and log house and was located on the Northeast

Quarter of Section Ten, in Pleasant Valley Township. It was on the bank of the Iowa River just below the mouth of Snyder Creek. This creek crosses the Pleasant Valley river road about five miles south of Iowa City, just north of the Stevens' farm residence.

It is well known to all those acquainted with Johnson County history that the first permanent white settler was Philip Clark, who migrated from Elkhart County, Indiana, in the fall of 1836, coming on horseback in company with Eli Myers. Clark selected his claim and returned the next spring and planted the first corn ever planted in Johnson County, chopping it in the sod. This farm is located at the inland village known as Mofordsville, and was afterwards known as the DeForest farm.

There has been much dispute as to the first white child born in Johnson County, four claiming this honor. The authentic histories of our county appear to give this distinction to Lucinda Hawkins, born late in August, 1837, on Section Twelve in Fremont Township. Lewis Earhart, son of Jacob and Nancy Earhart, was born on Section Twenty-two in Liberty Township, on September 3rd, 1837. Loren W. Harris, son of Judge Pleasant Harris, was born September 27, 1837, on Section Twenty-two in Liberty Township. Elizabeth Cain, daughter of John A. Cain, was born late in September, 1837, in Liberty Township.

The first wedding solemnized in Johnson County occurred on August 17, 1838, occurring at the home of Joseph Stover in Pleasant Valley Township, the contracting parties being Benjamin Ritter and Mary Stover.

The first burial in Oakland Cemetery was that of Cordelia Swan, young daughter of Chauncey Swan, who was the commissioner to locate Iowa City as the territorial capital. The burial occurred in September, 1839.

The first doctor practicing in Johnson County was Doctor

Teeples, who lived on the English River, which, at that time, was located in Johnson County. The first regular practicing physician, who established an office and practiced permanently in the county, was Doctor Henry Murray.

The first Fourth of July celebration occurred at the Gilbert trading house on July 4th, 1837, and was participated in almost exclusively by the Indians. The celebration consisted largely in consuming three barrels of whiskey.

The first real Fourth of July celebration occurred July 4, 1839, on what is now the original University Campus. A clearing was made in the hazel brush and timber and the corner stakes of the old capitol building were located. A small straight tree was trimmed for a flag pole. The orator delivered his oration standing in a wagon.

The first sale of lots in Iowa City, the new territorial capital, occurred on August 18, 1839. The purchasers selected the lots purchased in their order of purchase. The first lot selected was the one on which the Presbyterian Church now stands.

The first hotel in Iowa City was a double log cabin standing at what is now the corner of Gilbert and Brown streets.

Matthew TenEyck appears to have been the first white man who made a permanent home on the land which is now included within the boundaries of Iowa City. This was in the early part of 1839.

The first white child born in Iowa City was Hannah TenEyck, who was born on January 8, 1840.

The first house, aside from mere cabins built in Iowa City, was built by Mr. TenEyck on the corner of Iowa Avenue and Dubuque Street. It was the first two story house erected in Iowa City.

The first frame house was built by Wesley Jones on the south side of Washington Street, facing the present Uni-

versity Campus, and located just west of the Furbish corner.

The first brick building was erected by Mr. Bostwick.

The first regular hotel was constructed by Walter Butler, who also built the first dam at Coralville, and died during the incumbency of the office of sheriff. His son, Van Butler, is still living at West Branch, Iowa.

The first church erected in Johnson County was built in 1844, being a Methodist Episcopal church.

The first session of the legislature in Iowa City was held in 1841. It was held in a structure which stood on the north side of Washington Street between Clinton and Dubuque streets, on the site now occupied by the Bremer Clothing Company.

The first flouring mill in Johnson County was built and operated in 1841 by David and Joshua Switzer. It was located on Clear Creek and operated by water power.

The first dam across the Iowa River was built by Walter Terrell, the territorial legislature authorizing its erection by an act approved in 1840. It was especially provided in this act that the dam should not obstruct the navigation of the Iowa River, the delusion being general at that time that the Iowa River would be a navigable stream. The dam was not erected, however, until the spring of 1843.

It is interesting to know that the County Board of Supervisors in 1840 authorized the fixing of a standard of measures. It was ordered on March 6, 1840, "that Abner Walcott, Esq., be authorized to furnish the following standard of measures for the use of the County, to-wit: one three foot measure; one one foot measure; likewise a box containing 1075 1/5 inches for a half bushel."

Colonel Edward W. Lucas claims to have sown the first tame grass seed in Johnson County. This was in the fall of 1845.

It is claimed that the first Old Settlers' Association was organized in 1859. However, there is no authentic record of this. The first record of a meeting for the organization of an Old Settlers' Association shows that the meeting occurred in the Council Chamber of Iowa City on February 22, 1866, at which time a committee was appointed to prepare a Constitution and By-Laws for such association. A resolution was adopted that only those who resided in Johnson County prior to January, 1843, were regarded as old settlers.

The first annual picnic of the Old Settlers of Johnson County was held in the grove which is now known as "Woodlawn," Iowa City, on the 3rd of June, 1866. Smiley H. Bonham delivered the first annual address.

The first County Fair was held in June, 1853, on the site of the present University Campus.

The first Court opened in Johnson County convened on May 13, 1839, at Gilbert's trading house.

The first attorney representing the county was Asa Calkins. No definite compensation was fixed, the resolution of the County Board providing that his fee should be reasonable. A little later arrangements were made with Gilman Folsom to represent the county, he having an office in the Court House, and provision being made that part of his fees were to apply on the rent of his office.

The first telegraphic dispatch sent from Iowa City was sent to Davenport on January 8, 1867. It described an accident which occurred to a switchman in the Iowa City yards, resulting in his death.

We reproduce here some quotations from an article entitled "The Historic Capital of Iowa" published in the *Magazine of American History* for June, 1889, written by Eva Emery Dye.—EDITOR.

One May morning, fifty years ago (this was written in

1889), a thin column of smoke rose on a bluff overlooking a picturesque forest of oak and hickory; a banner might have been seen waving in the air, and a fresh-hewn slab bore the inscription:

Seat of Government, Iowa City, May 4, 1839.

This was the birth of Iowa City, and all of Iowa then open to settlement was a strip fifty miles wide bordering the Mississippi river. That little strip of territory, which had been a part of Louisiana, Missouri, Michigan, and Wisconsin, had actually set up housekeeping for itself in the great national family, and needed a governmental home. To establish this, three commissioners, appointed by the first territorial legislature, had pressed beyond the line of the old Black Hawk Purchase to one of nature's fairest scenes and choicest collections of water, stone, and wood, and for the first time the stars and stripes fluttered among the oaks that for generations had guarded the hunting grounds of the Sacs and Foxes. By fiat of Congress, these red-skinned warriors retired to the Indian territory twenty miles to the west, and over the graves of their fathers was re-enacted the daily miracle of our century. Never was capital located in a wilder spot. Iowa, "The Beautiful Land," lay in its primeval splendor of forest, stream and emerald prairie—that land that had reminded the adventurous Frenchman of his own loved champagnes, wanting only the vineyard and the curling smoke of the cottage to deceive his longing heart; that land that had been a football for the sport of kings, tossed from France to Spain, from Spain to France again, and was sold to us at last because Napoleon needed gold; that land where the Indian trail was trodden still, where the trader coursed the rivers with his scanty wares, and the trapper lived in solitude.

Pressing through thickets and tangles of slough-grass, winding over prairies brilliant with rich-hued flowers, ford-

ing bridgeless streams, came the wagon of the emigrant. The news of the founding of the capital spread to the east, and in those days before the California rush Iowa became the westward point of the homeseeker and the fortune hunter. Some came to speculate, others to stay. In that first bright summer, half a century ago, some slept under the trees of the forest with slumbers broken by the wolf's long howl, others dwelt in tents, and as cabins were erected their floors were covered at night with the tired pioneers who sought refuge from the chilling dew. Old "Leanback Hall" was built of logs cut from the city plot, and, tradition says, was furnished with a single bed, large enough to accommodate thirty-six men. Many of the first settlers were from Ohio, and by instinct, as it were, took to the woods, leaving the broad open prairie for later comers.

Ten years before Chicago saw her first locomotive, when thousands of acres lay unclaimed in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, the sum of \$45,000 was realized in this corner of Iowa through the original sales of lots. With temporary homes and scanty provisions, some apprehension was felt at the approach of the first winter, but the weather was mild, and wood was abundant. As there were no mills nearer than the Mississippi river the people ground their corn by hand, and many a prairie-fowl and noble deer that sped over College hill fell before the hunter's rifle. The wild turkey gobbled in the hazel thicket, quails and chipmunks skurried through the village streets, and along the river the beaver, musk-rat, mink, and otter unwarily walked into the snares of the trapper.

Immigration had heretofore been guided only by old Indian trails or the haphazard ox-wagon track, and in groping its way to Iowa City its wagons were often like ships at sea beating about to find an uncertain harbor. This ended when Iowa's first delegate to congress, driving by

slow stages from his corn-field near Burlington to the national capital, secured an appropriation for the opening of a military road from Dubuque to Iowa City, which became the highway of travel to the interior.

The first court was held in the old log hut of a fur trader, and there being no room for the jury, like the old Saxon Witenagemot, went out into the open air to deliberate, and the sheriff meted out their bounds by nature's barriers of creek and river, including in this august jury-room more than half a section of breezy, billowy prairie, as well as some scores of ill-clad Indians. The petit and grand-jury rooms were divided by the trail leading up to Wapasha-sheik's Indian town near by. The grand jurors wanted to go a-fishing, but unfortunately the river was on the petit-jury side. In the saffron files of a Philadelphia paper of half a century ago may be found an account of this court, written by an attorney, in which he relates that on one evening, after a prisoner's conviction, the judge played the fiddle and said prisoner danced for the amusement of the company.

When the new town was scarcely twelve weeks old, there dashed into its midst one day a gay cavalcade, led by the blue-coated figure of His Excellency Governor Robert Lucas, white-haired and stately on his bay pacer, with his daughter and niece and General Fletcher all intent on seeing the seat of government. The logs of rising cabins rested as the workmen came out to pay their homage to the distinguished visitors. The best cabin in the town, the only one with an attic, was placed at their disposal, and that night the governor went to his slumbers by the primitive ladder against a narrow hatchway in the upper floor.

A contract having been made with the firm that built the capitol of Illinois at Springfield, to construct a similar structure at Iowa City, a large force had accomplished by

July 4, 1840, ten thousand dollars' worth of work on the foundation; therefore the corner-stone of the edifice illustrious was laid amid the booming of guns and the waving of pioneer hats. Governor Lucas addressed the assemblage. The celebration of the day closed with a barbecue under the forest trees, in what is now the city park.

From the "Old Capitol Quarry," till then untouched, save in the crude age of Indian art, stone was cut and hauled to the top of Capitol square, where busy workmen piqued the curiosity of the squirrel above and the lurking red man below, with the steady click of hammer and chisel. Slightly varying from the original plan by Father Mazzuchelli, the blocks of gray limestone shaped themselves in Doric symmetry, aspiring columns rose on the porticos, and the dome curved its fair calyx above the oaks of ages. No costly wood carving or pillars of marble graced the primitive capitol. The great Wisconsin pineries were not yet opened—the interior was finished with Alleghany pine, the floors were of native oak, and the shingles were bought in Cincinnati. All this, however, was not done in a day, nor in a year. The stress of poverty that hampers all new states was heavily felt in Iowa; droughts and floods, financial crises, and cholera kept the exchequer low. Delay followed delay, so that the rear portico stands unfinished to this day.

In cold wind and icy sleet the first legislature assembled in Iowa City, just thirty months after it was founded, and met a cordial welcome in the busy little town of seven hundred people. No railroad brought them to the seat of government but the tedious lumbering coach, or the solitary horseman threaded his lonely way in the face of a fierce December storm. As the capitol was yet unfinished the first legislators occupied a temporary frame structure erected by a public-spirited citizen (Walter Butler) for the purpose; this was decorated by the patriotic ladies and

furnished with the outfit sent on from Burlington, the temporary seat of government.

As early as 1848 the railroad question was agitated in Iowa City. In 1849 the first road reached Chicago; in 1854 the first railroad touched the Mississippi at Rock Island. On New Year's eve, 1855, the Mississippi and Missouri company laid their last rail to Iowa City by the light of burning tar-barrels at midnight. Far out along the track the bonfires blazed and crowds of citizens laid rails with a right good will, to enable the contractors to complete the work before the advent of the new year. Preparations had been made to celebrate the event with befitting splendor. Thousands of invitations had been sent to the east summoning the world in general to participate in their jubilee.

January 3, was ushered in by one of the coldest days of winter, the mercury twenty degrees below zero. The crisp snow creaked under foot, the trees glittered with frost, and the keen air nipped the unprotected ear. For weeks the whole town had been busy—turkeys by the hundred, butter by the ton, cake and pastry, fruit and flowers in sumptuous profusion awaited the bidden guests. At 2 P. M., the booming of cannon announced the arrival of the first passenger train with seven car-loads of people. Sleighs and carriages were in waiting, but, in that fierce cold, no one waited for conveyances, but rushed wildly to the warmed and decorated capitol. All the country round about was pouring in; up the winding stairs of the legislative halls, a thousand, two thousand poured to a welcome and a banquet that in point of magnificence has not to this day been surpassed by anything of the kind ever attempted in Iowa. It was the very blossoming of hope in the ambitious capital of a proud young state. At that feast, multitudinous lights shone over as fair women and as brave men as ever assembled in the west. Among the dignitaries from abroad were, General

John A. Dix, of New York; Henry Farnum, the great railroad magnate; the mayor of Chicago; and capitalists and editors from many leading cities. As night sped on they heeded not the wintry blast. Within were speeches and music and dancing; without, the frost sparkled on the snowy breast of the glad New Year; and not till the wee, sma' hours of morning did the last strain die away, and the last footfall resound among the corridors of the capitol. Such was the welcome accorded the first railroad into the heart of the great world west of the Mississippi.

In the fall of 1880, the *Iowa City Republican* published a weekly leaflet devoted to the early history of Iowa. A number of the early settlers then living contributed some very interesting articles on early history for this leaflet.

Mr. Cyrus Sanders, one of the very early and prominent settlers of this county, wrote a number of articles describing some of the early incidents of county history. We quote herewith from an article published September 15, 1880, relative to the first Fourth of July celebration in Iowa City, held on July 4, 1839.—EDITOR.

As the Fourth of July was near at hand, our patriotic citizens in conjunction with Mr. Swan and his men, commenced laying plans for holding a good old-fashioned celebration on the grounds of our future Capitol, and when the auspicious day came the stars and stripes were unfurled to the breeze by attaching the flag-staff to the top of a tall young oak tree, that had previously been denuded of all its branches. This tree stood on the spot now occupied by the Central building of our State University, and this was perhaps the first occasion on which the American flag ever waved over the ground now occupied by our beautiful young city. The day proved to be very pleasant and in good time the cavalcade from the Indian trading house, four miles down the river, bringing the dinner, made its appearance. Col. Thomas Cox, who was a noble and portly specimen of the old school gentlemen, was chosen to preside, —

— was selected to read the Declaration of Independence and John Frierson to deliver the oration and the usual committees on toasts, etc. were appointed. The rostrum used for the occasion was the wagon on which the dinner had been brought to the ground and in the back part of said wagon was a barrel of Cincinnati whiskey and a tin cup. Now lest this last statement should grate somewhat harshly upon the sensibility of my temperance readers, permit me to say by way of extenuation of this circumstance that amongst the frontiersmen assembled on that occasion there was, perhaps not one who had ever heard a temperance lecture in his life, nor had the fame of the great temperance reformer, Father Matthew, reached America at that time, neither had our Government decided that spirituous liquor was a luxury by levying a tax upon it; and furthermore the article was cheap, costing only about eighteen cents per gallon—and lastly as my strongest argument in justification of what, by many, would hardly be regarded as the proper thing to do at the present day, we had all been taught, by our worthy ancestors, both by precept and example, that it was as necessary to the proper celebration of that day to be provided with that kind of ammunition as it was to be provided with gunpowder. And now if the above reasons are not a sufficient extenuation, dear reader, you will have to fall back upon some more able logician—as they are my very strongest arguments.

At the proper time, Gen. John Frierson, the orator, mounted the rostrum to deliver the oration; and here I will diverge to give a description of the orator. His complexion was sandy, he was tall, spare, raw boned, hard featured, stoop shouldered, knock-kneed and pigeon toed. Now you have the picture before you of the man who stood up in that wagon with one foot elevated upon the barrel of whiskey and made a speech far surpassing in eloquence and ability

the average productions on similar occasions, for the man in many respects possessed abilities much superior to the average Fourth of July orator.

We reproduce from the early Iowa leaflet published February 2, 1881, a description of the method used in breaking the original prairie sod in Johnson County, which may be interesting.—EDITOR.

In breaking prairie, an enormous plow was used that would cut a furrow of from twenty-four to forty inches wide. The beam of this mammoth plow was about six by eight inches, twelve to fourteen feet long, and the front end was attached to a pair of wheels, or trucks, from which a lever extended back to the plow, by which the plowman could regulate the depth of the furrow, or, if necessary, throw his plow entirely out of the ground. He always carried with him a file, for the purpose of keeping the share of the plow sharp, so it would cut through the tough, fibrous roots of the prairie grass. Attached to this ponderous plow, to draw it, was usually a team of four or seven yokes of heavy oxen, and I have seen as many as thirteen yokes to a single plow. When in operation, a person twenty rods away could hear a dull, roaring sound, like that of a distant storm. This was caused by the plow cutting through the tough roots of the prairie grass, and occasionally a report like the dull crack of a pistol was heard, caused by the plow severing a large "red root". This root grew in the dry prairie, as large as a man's arm, was nearly as hard as cast-iron, and often brought the ploughshare which came in contact with it to grief. The team and plow were usually managed by two persons; but sometimes a single man managed both, as the plow needed but little attention after it was set in the furrow. The driver usually carried a whip, the stock of which was ten to twelve feet long, with a lash about twice that length made of heavy buckskin, and some

drivers became so skillful in handling this whip that they could cut a gash through the thick hide of an ox that would look as if done with a knife.

A squad of Indians could often be seen looking on at the operation of the prairie breaker, and when the driver, as was often the case, would use such words as are not set down in the Sunday school books, the noble red man would repeat them and then the whole company would join in a great laugh. The Indian is an apt scholar in language, especially of that kind.

When night came on, the oxen were unyoked and turned loose on the prairie to fill themselves, during the night, with the luxurious grass, which, though all the feed they had during the summer, usually kept them in good condition. Sometimes, in the morning, the breaker found that his cattle had wandered off to a great distance, and it required several hours wading through the tall, wet grass to collect them, and get under way again: which made his business a very laborious, slavish, and unhealthy one.

An ordinary day's work, for one team, was from two to three acres, and the compensation three dollars an acre. The ground first broken was generally planted with corn, which was done by dropping the seed in every second furrow, so that the edge of the next furrow lap would fall over it, and the corn could sprout up through the seam between the furrow laps, for it was impossible for the tender sprouts to force their way through the tough sod. Another method of planting was to take an axe, and striking it through the sod, then press the foot on the orifice and close it. This method generally produced the best crop, but the work was very slow and laborious. This first planting, or "sod crop", as it was called, if the season was favorable, generally yielded about twenty bushels of corn to the acre,

and was of great benefit to the new settler in assisting him to get through the first winter with his stock.

Nearly all of our early settlers brought ox teams with them, and it was as rare a sight then to see a team of horses as it is now to see an ox team. It was some years after the first settlement before I saw an attempt made to break prairie with horses.

The following are descriptions of Judge Joseph Williams, the first District Judge who ever held court in Johnson County, and of Doctor S. M. Ballard, one of the earliest physicians to practice in this county.—EDITOR.

Judge Williams was a very remarkable man, and will be held in remembrance by the early settlers of this county as long as any of them remain. He could preside over a court with a great deal of dignity and formality, requiring each session to be opened with a grandiloquent proclamation, as if it were the Court of the Queen's Bench. He was a great humorist; could tell a funny story, sing a comic song, and act it out to the life; was an accomplished ventriloquist, an excellent performer on the violin, and withal, a prominent member of the Methodist Church. He could lead in class meeting, pitch the tune in singing hymns, and exhort when occasion required. While he was traveling around the circuit holding courts, the young folks sometimes met for a dance; and, as musicians were scarce, they would often, it is said, press the Judge into the service. But he being a strict church member, would tell them he could not *countenance* dancing; so he would seat himself with his back to the dancers and play the fiddle for them all night. Such was the kindly, jolly, hospitable, big-hearted Judge Joseph Williams. Blessed be his memory.

A history of the early days of Johnson county would hardly be complete without mention of Dr. S. M. Ballard, who made his advent in the county early in the spring of

1841. The Doctor was six feet six inches in height, and of course presented a very commanding appearance. He came mounted on his fine, sleek, brown horse "Charley", carrying in his hand a heavy silver-mounted hickory cane, and across his saddle was swung a pair of pill-bags that would contain about a half-bushel, with heavy bear-skin flaps, dressed with the hair on. He rode as erect as a telegraph pole, and looked like a mounted grenadier. He immediately entered on the practice of his profession.

The idea that the Iowa River is navigable for steamboats would be regarded today as fantastic. However, in the early history of the county the proposition that the Iowa River would be a navigable stream to the great advantage of Iowa City was seriously entertained. We give below the incident of the arrival of the first steamer in Iowa City, and quote from the *Iowa City Standard* of June 20, 1841.—EDITOR.

We this week announce an event, which, in our judgment, is of more importance than any that has happened since our city has had an existence.

On the 20th instant our citizens were surprised by hearing the puffing of an approaching steamer. We need not speak of the astonishment caused by such unusual sounds,—sounds which were for the first time heard on our peaceful river,—nor of the many conjectures which were started as to the source from whence they proceeded. Our doubts were soon dispelled by the glorious reality, as the steamer Ripple, for the first time, came dashing up the Iowa and landed at the ferry, which henceforth is only to be known by the more appropriate name of the steamboat landing.

The hearty cheers which hailed the arrival, and the warm welcome which the captain, crew, and passengers received from our citizens, showed that they appreciated the enterprise and determination which had originated and successfully carried out such an undertaking.

The Ripple arrived at the conjunction of the Iowa and Cedar rivers on Friday evening. On Saturday morning she started and ran up within four miles of this city before she stopped for the night. There were no impediments found to an easy and safe navigation of the river, if we may except a few snags and projecting trees a few miles below the city, which will be removed by our citizens during the present week.

The experiment, as a whole, was a most satisfactory one. The present comparatively low stage of water will effectually silence all sneers that may be thrown out concerning high water navigation, etc., and we now have the fact proved beyond the possibility of a doubt, that the Iowa river is navigable beyond this place for seven months at least during every year.

This arrival has effectually changed the relation in which we formerly stood to the other towns in this Territory. We are now no longer dependent on the towns on the Mississippi for our imports, nor are we subjected to the labor and expense of drawing across the country all articles brought from abroad. We have now a situation in many respects superior to any in the Territory. The advantage of being the farthest point in the interior which has a safe and easy communication by water with all the great commercial cities in the west, is too manifest to need remark. Indeed some of our neighboring towns on the Mississippi have laid claims to being places of great importance on this ground alone. We trust we have settled all disputes on this point, and that they will now at once yield the palm to us, and surrender all claims they may have on this score. But when we add to these advantages our acknowledged superiority in beauty of location and fertility of soil, and call to mind our almost total exemption from those diseases which are

and ever have been the scourges of the West, we can confidently demand the attention of emigrants and others to a situation which combines every advantage that can attract the merchant and the farmer, the man of business, or the man of pleasure.

NECROLOGICAL LIST 1924-1925

AUGUST, 1924

DECEMBER, 1924

Johnson County Old Settlers' Association 41

FEBRUARY, 1925

	DATE	AGE
Mrs. John Hart.....	2	63
Mrs. Christine Kahler.....	2	86
Mrs. Matthew Cavanaugh..	5	..
Byron Reynolds	5	79
Albert Klein	5	54
David Wray	8	76
Mrs. Laura M. Miller.....	8	..
H. A. Fitzgeralds.....	9	..
Henry Sleighter	9	69
John Kohout	10	95
Mrs. John Kohout.....	11	..
Emsley Fountain	11	78
Mrs. Matilda M. Thomas..	13	66
Bessie Vikel	13	23
Mrs. M. M. Snavely.....	14	59
John Conrad Nass.....	16	80
Oliver Ansel Connelly.....	18	67
Mrs. Albert McCray.....	21	35
Samuel Tucker .....	..	94
Philip Mulcahy .....	..	54
Mrs. Maria Farnsworth.....	..	89
Mrs. Susan Martin.....	24	82
Mary Troyer	26	62
Jos. Stochl	27	61
Mrs. Anna Pzelka.....	27	75
Patrick W. Sullivan.....	28	..
J. W. Hacke.....	28	..

MARCH, 1925

Jos. T. Kessler.....	3	76
Wm. Fairall	5	..
Mrs. Lydia Rate.....	5	88
Jas. Nesmith	5	90
Mrs. Thomas Anderson....	5	..
Francis J. Fox.....	6	77
Alex Story	7	61
Wm. R. Hart.....	8	65
Jas. Brunson	8	..
Warren Snider	9	86
Julius Kohl	10	66
Mrs. Michael Callahan....	11	70

DATE AGE

Zariah Rohrer	11	77
Wesley Kadlak	11	68
Mrs. Frances Smith.....	14	92
Celia Baschnagel	14	..
Mrs. Mary Contris	16	..
Benjamin Brock	17	..
Mrs. Honora O'Kief.....	25	88
Mrs. Edward S. Allen.....	17	80
Frank Swisher	26	76
John McCraith	28	73
Theodore Sanxay .....	..	..
Geo. W. Hildenbrand.....	28	62
Mrs. Anna Cerney.....	29	78
Mrs. Michael Goss.....	30	68
Mrs. Anna Buchmayer.....	31	84
Mrs. Zephanick Cray.....	27	85
Harry Campbell .....	..	..
Mrs. Robt. Williams.....	27	..

APRIL, 1925

Mrs. Jos. Schonfelder.....	1	..
Mrs. Lynn Colony.....	5	35
Mrs. Ellen Harrington.....	2	..
Mrs. Katherine Riddle.....	7	..
John Archer	8	..
Alexander Scott .....	..	..
Joseph O. Chapman.....	13	..
Mrs. Anna Picha.....	18	..
H. J. Paasch.....	17	63
Benjamin F. Davis.....	19	..
Wm. Walsh	21	46
A. G. Runyon.....	21	79
Mrs. Maude Merritt.....	..	..
Mrs. Frances Solnar.....	22	78
Jacob Hofman	22	..
Mrs. Margaret Ulch.....	23	65
Mrs. Stephen Paine.....	23	..
Mrs. Mary Wombacher.....	24	..
Miss Marie Rohret.....	27	..
Alvin Beranek .....	..	..
Mrs. Thomas Grady.....	27	50
Edgar M. Morsman.....	..	85

	DATE	AGE		DATE	AGE			
Mrs. Stewart Bell.....	..	68	Robt. Lucas	19	71			
Joseph Pepler	28	66	Francis J. Kane.....	22	73			
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Joseph F. Dooley.....	6	..	Geo. D. Barth.....	22	53			
Ulrich Linzenhuber	4	82	J. G. Thomas.....	25	32			
Peter Zahs	8	68	JULY, 1925					
Jas. Morgan	9	76	Thos. Bolton	2	85			
Mina Euler	9	71	Mrs. Wm. Ernst.....	3	92			
Mrs. Silas Glaspey.....	9	77	Frank Shay	6	40			
Mrs. S. A. Irish.....	10	87	Bea McGuan	11	..			
Geo. A. Bolton.....	11	71	Jas. Bridenstine	11	96			
Mrs. Olivia A. Clark.....	15	69	Olin Beals	13	33			
Mrs. Mary A. Mathes.....	14	..	Mrs. S. A. McGinnis.....	16	52			
John Brosh .....	..	..	Geo. Reddick	20	61	
Mrs. Wm. Olson.....	..	37	Walter Hollenbeck .....	..	54		
Albert J. Stonebarger....	14	68	Mrs. Anton Ulch.....	24	56			
Edward Stiner	16	50	Mrs. Eliza Kent.....	24	85			
Dennis Flynn	14	62	Mrs. Matthew Hauber....	28	43			
Mrs. Catherine Krantz....	15	..	Mrs. F. E. Humphrey.....	..	72			
Philip Henry Breece.....	17	..	John Maxon	26	92			
Mrs. Geo. Jarrard.....	17	62	Mrs. Bertha Owen Morrison	26	60			
Rev. Raymond J. Beecher..	24	..	AUGUST, 1925					
L. W. Miller.....	28	72	Milton Thompson	1	61			
John Webster	27	..	Geo. Cornwall	1	..			
Ezra Thompson	30	96	Adolph Slezak	4	69			
JUNE, 1925								
John Curry	1	70	Mrs. Ulrich Lenzenhuber...	9	78			
George Holubar	2	43	Chas. C. Ballard.....	13	36			
David Goodwin	3	65	Joe Wall	14	32			
Mrs. John G. Sheetz.....	4	62	John Miller	14	19			
David Rhodes	4	79	Paul Miller	14	23			
Mrs. Louisa Roessler.....	..	..	Abner Bradley	24	..	
Robt. J. Bulechek.....	..	..	Dr. David Brockman.....	..	..	
Eda Louis	9	63	Mrs. Amanda Tantlinger...	..	89			
Mrs. Elsie H. Stempel....	..	69	Mrs. Frank Zeman.....	29	34			
Mrs. Lizzie Luther.....	..	..	Fred Shoals	29	59	
Mrs. Margaret Rose.....	..	83	Mayme Lodge	30	..			
			Ben Stevik	31	70			

